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BY

CHURCHES IN EDINBURGH, AND OTHER PLACES.

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R E P O R T.

The Churches of Christ assembling in College Street and Leith-Walk, Edinburgh—to all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours : Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

To your consideration, beloved Brethren, the following Report is now addressed.

THE attention which has of late years been excited to the miserable condition of a great part of the world, and the means employed to diffuse the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus among the nations, must be highly gratifying to every believer of the gospel. Never since the Reformation have the thoughts of Christians been so generally directed to this important object. Indeed if we make a very few exceptions, it appears to have been altogether neglected. Various reasons might be given for this neglect. It might be alleged, and probably with justice, that Christians have been guided too much by their own ideas of the secret purposes of God, instead of remembering, that their only sure guide is that word which he has given to be a lamp to their paths, and a light to their feet. It may be, they forgot, in a great measure, the connection which subsists in all the plans of Providence between the means and the end. They hoped and prayed for the success of the gospel ; but they overlooked the important questions, How shall they call on him of whom they have not heard ? And how shall they hear without a preacher ? And how shall they preach except they be sent ? If God had spread the gospel extensively without employing the zealous exertions of his people to effect it, it would have been contrary to what he has given us reason to expect, and so far as we can trace it, contrary to the general plan of his providence.

Perhaps those who believed that God would employ the active endeavours of his people in diffusing the truth, expected that their zeal was to be called forth by some singular divine interposition. They might imagine that till this should take place, the time was not come, the time when the Lord's house should be built, not reflecting that God has commanded us in his holy word to use every means in our power, *at all times*, to promote his glory, and to do good to our brethren of men. That some such idea operated on the minds of believers, is highly probable. At all events, we have, in the sloth and inactivity of Christians, compared with the indefatigable exertions of merchants and men of science, a lively illustration of our Lord's words, "The children of this world are wiser in conducting their affairs, than the children of light"

But however Christians might quiet their consciences, while so great a part of the world, to which they had free access, was buried in idolatry, we apprehend that one of the principal causes of their doing so little, was their not entering into the meaning of our Lord's words, John xviii. 36. "My kingdom is not of this world." They had no idea of spreading the gospel merely by the conversion of individuals. They deemed it necessary that the religion of Jesus should be supported by the civil power. Hence, where this could not be looked for, they considered individual exertions as in a great measure unavailing. That such views were entertained, is evident from the conduct of all the Reformers. How anxious were they to get the authority of the civil Magistrate on their side! When the Protestant princes were at war, they seem to have thought that on the issue of it depended the cause of the Reformation. They forgot that the religion of Jesus kept its ground, and prospered, not only without the support, but even in defiance of all the opposition of the Roman Emperors; and that the dreadful corruptions against which they were struggling, had arisen from the unnatural alliance of a spiritual and temporal kingdom.

It is indeed true, that where the Protestants were successful, great advantages accrued, even in regard to spiritual things; whereas, on the contrary, where they were unsuccessful, a complete check was given to investigation. This, however, was in a great measure owing to the connection which subsisted between civil liberty and the Reformation. This connection induced some of the kings of Europe to oppose the Protestant religion with a zeal which would not probably have been called forth on account of religion alone. The Protestants made it a common cause, and this no doubt greatly excited the jealousy of the Roman Catholics. Cromwell, for instance, treated with the King of France about the persecution of the Protestants, and partly by threats obtained better usage for them. No wonder that Ca-

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tholic princes were glad to get rid of people, whom they justly considered as more attached to foreign princes of the Protestant persuasion than to their own sovereigns. Had the Reformers acted upon scriptural principles, disclaiming all interference with civil governments, leaving them as they found them, giving honour and subjection to the powers that be, and at the same time wholly rejecting their interference in religious concerns, there is no doubt but the cause of Jesus would have prospered more, and we should not have seen at this day whole kingdoms, like Spain and Portugal, in the grossest darkness.

It is long before prejudice is eradicated: but the progress of truth, although often slow, is always certain, where the Scriptures are generally read. We cannot indeed suppose, that all who are at present engaged in the cause of missions, have just views of the nature of Christ's kingdom; but the very circumstance that so many Christians are engaged in this cause, appears to us an evident proof that believers have made considerable progress in their views of truth on this subject. Those connected with civil establishments, as well as dissenters, are sending out missionaries, not to treat with heathen governments about adopting Christianity as their national religion, but to endeavour, by preaching remission of sins through the blood of Christ, to call individuals from darkness to light, and to teach them to observe the ordinances of Christ.

The number of societies which have been formed, may appear to some a cause of regret. It may be alleged, that Christians ought all to unite in one body, to make known the common salvation. This is true. Were Christians what they ought to be, regarding the Scriptures alone as the rule of truth and duty, and being entirely directed by them, there would be no schisms or divisions among them in this or in any thing else; they would all be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. While there were fathers, young men, and babes among them, they would observe the same ordinances; and although, so long as they were in this world, they would be locally separated from one another, yet their unity and harmony, in consequence of being all taught by the self same Spirit, would demonstrate, that Jesus came forth from the Father, John xvii. 21.

If we judge by our own experience, we may be slow in believing, that this shall ever take place; but let us remember, that we live during that time of awful defection from the truth so clearly foretold in the Scriptures, when the witnesses of Jesus are prophesying in sackcloth, and the glory of the church is in a great measure concealed. The period of the woman's abode in the wilderness, Rev. xii. 6. has not yet expired; but we know assuredly, that it is drawing towards a close, and that soon all

the holy apostles and prophets, and all the redeemed, shall be called to join in songs of praise for the downfall of Babylon. When this shall be the case, when the Spirit shall be poured out from on high, when Christians, set free from a thousand prejudices which now fetter them, shall all study to regulate themselves by the one infallible standard—is it too much to expect, that they shall agree, not merely in their views of some great and important doctrines, but in regard to all the ordinances which Christ has delivered?

At present, however, we see them much divided; and the necessary consequence of this is, a greater or less degree of jealousy of each other. In such circumstances, their uniting in one body, to diffuse the knowledge of divine truth, about some parts of which they are not agreed, is perhaps not so desirable as it might appear at first sight. Unless they account the matters in which they disagree to be absolutely indifferent, (in which case they ought to put an end to their differences entirely), the diversity of sentiment will produce a certain degree of mutual suspicion, and their union will at the best be partial. While things are in this situation, perhaps there would be more unity amongst Christians, if each body acted according to its own views, without being obliged, from connection with others, either to go beyond or to fall short of them. In this case, believers would proceed with greater energy; and although their exertions might be conducted upon a smaller scale, yet, by each taking a separate field, more good might be done.

Impressed with these sentiments, the following Resolutions were adopted, and published by the churches in the *Missionary Magazine* for April 1803.



“The churches not only consider themselves debtors to their neighbours at home, but also to the heathen, who are perishing for lack of knowledge. Various considerations induce them, as churches, to attempt doing something abroad.

“1. The formation of a Missionary Society, seems to imply a deficiency in the constitution of a church of Christ, as if it were not competent for such to use all the means necessary for spreading the gospel. But in the New Testament we read of missions sent out by churches, and we hear of no other societies engaged in the work. Paul and Barnabas were sent out to the heathen by the church at Antioch. The churches were commanded to receive the brethren thus employed, and to bring them forward on their journey after a godly sort, 3 John 6. 10. From the church at Thessalonica, the word of the Lord sounded out in Macedonia and Achaia, 1 Thess. i. 8.

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Christians should as much as possible be of one mind when co-operating in the execution of any plan. They heartily wish success to every attempt for promoting the cause of Christ. They earnestly desire to see brotherly love more and more prevail among Christians, although in some respects differing from each other. But they believe this end will be best attained by each body of Christians walking according to the light they have received. None are in this case dragged beyond what they judge to be duty, nor are the consciences of others hurt by not going so far as they think they ought to do.

"3. Whatever they do, will be in addition to what is already doing by others. They are persuaded their plan will not prevent any society from sending out a single missionary. They have no idea of opposition. They will pray for all who, by proper means, endeavour to extend the Redeemer's kingdom. There is ample room for all their exertions.

"Under these impressions, the Churches call upon their members seriously to turn their attention to the great object of the conversion of the heathen. They call upon such as are willing to devote themselves to the work to come forward. The pastors will examine those who apply, will give in a report to the churches on the most favourable field for their exertions, and will lay before them whatever information they can collect on the subject.

"The funds necessary for carrying on this plan, to arise from collections, subscriptions, donations, &c.

"On the first Wednesday of every month, they will assemble for prayer for the success of the gospel at home and abroad.

"The pastors will write circular letters in their name to their sister churches, to acquaint them with their plan, and to invite them to turn their attention to the state of the heathen, and to consider and communicate what they think may be done for their relief."



The ideas suggested in the foregoing resolutions met with the cordial approbation of the brethren in our sister churches, with whom we conversed or corresponded on the subject. Nothing was now wanting but suitable persons to go out as Missionaries, and some station to be fixed upon where our exertions might commence. In regard to the former we were not long kept in suspense. Mr John Paterfon, who had studied under Mr Ewing, had it in view, from the time he began his studies, to devote himself to the work of preaching to the heathen. When his studies were finished, he went to Cambuslang, and by his instrumentality a church was planted there. The members were much attached to him, and were earnestly desirous of his remaining

amongst them, and becoming their pastor. Although he had not lost sight of his original design, he consented to this, partly from the prospect of usefulness there presented, and partly from not finding any of his fellow students, who were disposed to accompany him abroad.

At the time when the above resolutions were printed, he had been some years at Cambuslang. The prospect which this afforded him of going out in a way which he judged to be more scriptural than any other he had heard of, revived all his former desires. Connected with this, his intimate friend, Mr Archibald M'Lae, pastor of a church in Kirkcaldy, who in consequence of his marriage, had for a time dropped his original intention of devoting himself to the service of Jesus in foreign lands, was now equally desirous of embarking in the same cause. Having consulted together, they informed the churches in Edinburgh of their desire to go abroad to preach the gospel, and at the same time mentioned India as the sphere they wished to occupy. This proposal met with the cordial approbation of the churches; but as they wished to proceed with the full consent of their sister churches whose pastors had proposed themselves, they resolved to correspond on the subject with their brethren at Kirkcaldy and Cambuslang. In consequence of this resolution, the following correspondence took place.

"The churches of Christ in Edinburgh, to the church of Christ in Kirkcaldy: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

"We are informed, beloved brethren, that the mind of your dear pastor has, for a considerable time, been turned towards the state of the heathen; and, although much attached to you, among whom he has been for some time called to labour, he still desires to devote himself to the Lord's service amongst them.

"We are aware, dear brethren, of your regard and attachment to him; but we trust you will not be unwilling to give him up for so important a purpose.

"We are unanimous in wishing to join with our sister churches in forwarding his views; but without your mind we would do nothing in this matter.

"We shall esteem it a token for much good if you can cheerfully give him up to the work. We doubt not but you will see the hand of God in it, and will consider the earnest desire of our dear brother continuing so long, connected with the present favourable opportunity of sending him forth, as the voice of our Lord Jesus to you as a church.

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"With him, dear brethren, is the residue of the Spirit, and he, we doubt not, will amply compensate the loss you may sustain. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty."

"We would just suggest to you the importance of approved men going as missionaries. It is doubly necessary that such should not be novices; and that they should not only be able faithfully to preach the gospel, but also to teach the disciples to observe all things which the Lord hath commanded. The experience which our dear brother has had while with you, will be eminently useful to him in the work he has in view.

"We see, in the failure of some missions, and the success of others, the vast importance of men of knowledge and experience being sent out. This renders it, in some measure, absolutely necessary, that the churches should be ready to sacrifice their own inclinations to the glory of IMMANUEL. Without this, nothing great is to be expected from missions to the heathen. Let us also remind you, dear brethren, how much more easy it is to obtain a proper pastor for a church in this country than a well-qualified missionary.

"We do not mention these things from any doubt of your hearty concurrence in this matter; but we know that sometimes we are most apt to err in what most nearly concerns ourselves, and we use the privilege of brethren, to endeavour to strengthen and confirm your faith and zeal. Brethren, pray for us. If it be the Lord's will that you should be deprived of your pastor, we shall not cease to entreat him to fill his place with one after his own heart. We remain, brethren, yours in our common Lord."

"The church of Christ in Kirkcaldy to the churches of Christ in Edinburgh: Grace and peace be multiplied to you, through the knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord.

"Beloved brethren, We received your affectionate letter. The candour and tenderness which you manifest toward us in this affair, constrain us to give thanks to God on your account. We have had several meetings for prayer and consultation respecting the business of the mission. We are nearly divided in our opinion concerning the path of duty with regard to our pastor. The one half of the church, though much attached to their dear pastor, whom they highly esteem for his work's sake, and would have counted themselves happy to have enjoyed a continuation of his labours, yet, considering the state of the heathen, the earnest desire of his mind to devote himself to the work of the Lord among them, connected with the present favour-

able opportunity of sending him forth, think they are called to sacrifice their own inclinations, in order that the heathen may be given to Jesus for his inheritance ; and therefore they cheerfully give up their pastor to this important work.—But the other half of the church were of a different opinion. They could not see it to be the path of duty for him to leave his present important station ; they urged the possibility of their pastor being mistaken in this matter, the infant state of the church, the increasing desire of the people to hear the gospel ; that the new place of worship was nearly finished, which will contain the double of our present one, and consequently greatly enlarge the sphere of his usefulness ; the difficulty of finding a pastor who might give general satisfaction, and have other qualifications necessary for a proper discharge of the duties of the pastoral office ; and the great probability of finding a well qualified missionary, who did not now occupy an equally important station. These, with some other reasons which were mentioned, appeared to them weighty objections to their pastor going out as a missionary. But whilst they freely stated their present views, they were willing to consider the subject more fully, and were ready to say, The will of the Lord be done ; and if it were the will of God that their pastor should be called away to labour among the heathen, they would unite with the rest of their brethren, in following him with their best wishes and fervent prayers. Dear brethren, pray for us.

“ Kirkcaldy, 20th March 1804.”

“ The churches of Christ in Edinburgh, to the church of Christ in Kirkcaldy : Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

“ It was with unfeigned pleasure, that we learned by your very friendly letter, that so many of you, dear brethren, were willing cheerfully to give up your beloved Pastor to the work of preaching the gospel among the heathen. That some of you should not be exactly of the same mind, did not surprise us. We know how apt we all are to be biased by affection in the exercise of our judgment. We are well aware, beloved, that besides private attachment, other motives tend powerfully to operate on the minds of our dear brethren. They are concerned for the prosperity of the Lord’s work, and fear that our dear brother leaving Kirkcaldy might injure it much. We know you will bear with us, while we use the privilege of brethren in Christ, to endeavour to remove some of the obstacles which present themselves to your minds. We are assured, that your heart’s desire and prayer is, that you may be guided in the midst of the paths of judgment, and that in this, as in other

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matters, the will of the Lord may be done. Under this impression we write to you, brethren, with the utmost freedom, and we are fully satisfied, that you will impute what we say to affection for you, as well as an earnest desire for the general success of the gospel. We are far from thinking that the church should be indifferent about a faithful pastor, or that they should have no desire for his continuance amongst them. Such an one should be considered as a valuable gift from the great Head of the church, and ought to be esteemed very highly in love. But we must ever recollect the commandment to cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils. Will you pardon us, dear brethren, if we suspect that some degree of unbelief may suggest most of the objections stated in your letter.

"It is true the church is in an infant state, yet we are persuaded, brethren, that you are knit together by the love of the truth, and consequently that you have a firmer bond of union than that of any man however valuable.

"The qualifications necessary for the proper discharge of the pastoral office are highly important: but what iniquity have you found in Jesus which should lead you to doubt, that, in answer to your prayers, and those of your brethren, he will bestow on you a pastor after his own heart? We have no apprehension of any danger arising from your freely making the sacrifice; which, as it appears to us, the Lord so evidently demands; but we own we are not without uneasiness, lest, by refusing your full consent, and thus limiting the power and goodness of Jesus, where you have such clear intimations of his will, you should bring upon the church and cause of God at Kirkcaldy the very evils, which you dread as the consequence of parting with your beloved pastor.

"You have been praying the Lord to pity the poor heathen, and to stir up the hearts of his people to engage in the work of the gospel amongst them. He has heard your prayers; our dear brother says, Here am I! send me. Let us entreat you, brethren, to rejoice in the opportunity the Lord has given you of not only saying, Be ye warmed and clothed, but of denying yourselves for their benefit.

"You notice the probability of finding a well qualified missionary; but surely, brethren, you are aware, that the qualifications of a proper missionary are more rarely to be met with than those of a pastor. Knowledge, zeal, experience, and devotedness, are altogether indispensable in the former; and although a pastor ought to possess all these, a missionary requires them in a higher degree, from having little or no access to the counsel or advice of his brethren, and being exposed to far greater temptations and hardships in his work.

"We hinted in our last, that unless the churches were willing

to part with their pastors, whose hearts inclined them to the work, nothing great could be expected in the way of missionary exertions. Young men are unfit for the work, and those who have been preachers for some time, without being called to the pastoral care of a church, must in general be deficient in some qualifications which are essential for a missionary.

"You observe, dear brethren, that your pastor may be mistaken in this matter. But what additional evidence can he have of his call to the work? For many years he has been earnestly desirous of engaging in it. His being comfortably fixed in a situation, where he loves and is beloved by his brethren, has produced no change on his resolution. An opportunity is in providence afforded him of going abroad in the manner he judges most scriptural; a beloved brother in Christ is desirous of accompanying him; his partner in life is cheerfully ready to share with him the perils of the arduous undertaking. In short, brethren, if these are not sufficient indications of the will of God, we may despair of attaining certainty as to the path of duty, and must ever remain fixed to the situation in which we are placed whatever it may be. Indeed we apprehend so many weighty circumstances seldom concur to point out the path of duty. If the church had been from the first unanimous in encouraging him to go forward, you would then, brethren, have considered it his duty to proceed. But we can only conceive this to have arisen from the following causes: either that his labours were unacceptable to the church, and that they were desirous to part with him; or that the Lord had miraculously interfered by giving a commandment, as he did to the church at Antioch, in regard to Paul and Barnabas; or had no less miraculously influenced the minds of every individual of the church to part with a beloved pastor, neither of which you will think we were entitled to expect, as they were contrary to the Lord's ordinary method of working. If those pastors only were to go as missionaries who were not deeply regretted by their respective churches, we fear, brethren, little would be done among the heathen.

"We cannot but remind you, by what a frail tenure you hold our beloved brother as your pastor. He may in a moment be removed from you. He may be laid aside by sickness; or if, from over attachment, you were to prevail on him to remain, his services might be rendered unprofitable, and even strife and division might arise between you and him. What a striking lesson we have in the case of Mr Pearce, of one who was overpersuaded not to go to the heathen, on account of the sphere of usefulness in which he was placed, and who was so soon after removed from his people! It has been said, notwithstanding his earnest desire to go abroad, the event shewed he was mistaken as to his call to the work. But this we apprehend to be unfound-

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ed. The event indeed shews that God did not design to send him abroad; but it by no means proves that he did not call him to the work. There are many things which occur contrary to the will of God. Sin is opposite to it. God would rather that the wicked should turn and live: and yet multitudes perish. It was the will of God that the Corinthians should, with the utmost reverence and brotherly love, partake of the Lord's supper; yet many died for not doing so. We are therefore taught to pray that his will may be done on earth as it is in heaven. Yet in another sense this has been the case in every age. His counsel has stood, and he has done all his pleasure. Who hath resisted his will?

"We rejoiced to hear, that our dear brethren are disposed more fully to consider the subject, and to say, The will of the Lord be done! And we cannot but think, that upon weighing all circumstances, you will all be led cheerfully to join with us in bidding your dear pastor and his fellow labourer God speed in that work on which their hearts are so much fixed.

"We cannot conclude, brethren, without observing, that although it is undoubtedly the duty of our brother to consider all the arguments which any of the church can bring forward, and even to attach all due weight to their opinion, it is impossible for him to give up his own judgment as to the path of duty without becoming the servant of men, and acting unfaithfully to his great Master. This, we think, must be sufficiently obvious; and we trust that having delivered your opinion on the subject, and finding our dear brother still fully persuaded in his own mind that it is his duty to preach in foreign regions the unsearchable riches of Christ, you will avoid adding to the painful feeling which the thought of quitting you and his other brethren in Christ must necessarily produce. You will on the contrary, we trust, by your prayers strengthen his hands, and by your countenance encourage his heart.

"You have heard, beloved, of the resolution of the church at Cambuslang. We rejoice in the grace bestowed on them, and we are persuaded of you, brethren, that our bowels shall be refreshed by hearing that you are like minded. And now, brethren, we commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among them who are sanctified: and with earnest prayers for your furtherance and joy of faith, we are, dear brethren, yours in the fellowship of the gospel.

"Edinburgh, March 29. 1804."

"The church of Christ in Kirkcaldy, to the churches of Christ in Edinburgh: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Beloved brethren, We received your friendly letter on the 31st March. The considerations suggested in it are indeed weighty and important. We are now fully convinced, that the reasons which induced us to think, that it was our pastor's duty to remain in his present station, may be applied with equal force in favour of his going out as a missionary. And being fully persuaded in his own mind, that he is called to preach the glorious gospel of the blessed God among the heathen, and that the objections which have been urged against it are by no means sufficient to justify his desisting from the important work on which his heart is more than ever fixed, we cannot therefore persist in opposing his views on this subject, lest we should be found to fight against God. You will easily perceive, brethren, that to part with our beloved pastor, whose labours have been blessed in bringing some of us to the knowledge of Jesus, and refreshing all our souls, is indeed a very trying dispensation. But after mature reflection and deliberation, we are inclined to think, that it is the Lord's will that we should make this sacrifice; and surely none are under stronger obligations than we, to comply with what we conceive to be the will of our heavenly Father, without murmuring or disputing. Therefore, from a full conviction of duty, we, with unfeigned cheerfulness, give up our beloved pastor to the work of the Lord among the heathen, and we earnestly beseech and pray God to bestow on him and his fellow labourer all needful grace, and to conduct them in safety to their intended destination, and open for them a wide and an effectual door which no man can shut, and that by the blessing of God accompanying their labours, many may be "turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven."

"We have been much engaged, especially of late, in praying that the Lord's way might be made known on earth, and his saving health among all nations. Little, however, did we expect, that our prayers were to be answered by the removal of our pastor. But we hope that this dispensation shall have a tendency to extend the boundaries of the kingdom of Christ, and make us more than ever feel a lively interest in missionary exertions. And we shall esteem it our duty and privilege heartily to concur with you in testifying our love to the Lord Jesus and the souls of men, by communicating of our temporal substance, according as the Lord hath prospered us, for the support of the mission.

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"As in all probability we shall be deprived of our pastor, we hope you will unite with us in praying the great Head of the church to give us a pastor after his own heart, so that we may receive damage in nothing.

"We remain yours, beloved brethren, in the fellowship of the gospel.

"*Kirkcaldy, April 11. 1804.*

"The churches of Christ in Edinburgh, to the church of Christ in Kirkcaldy : Grace and peace be multiplied.

"We have received, dear brethren, your letter in answer to our last. We can truly say that we give thanks to God on your behalf. We observe that you not only give up your beloved pastor to the Lord's work, but that you do it with cheerfulness. Brethren, we feel for the sacrifice you are called to make : but fear not ; you are lending to the Lord, and he will repay. He is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love. We are persuaded that he will supply all your wants out of his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

"We have nothing particular to state to you at present in regard to the destination of our dear brother ; but we hope very soon to lay before you some plan on the subject. We shall not cease to pray for you, and we request, beloved, that you would not fail to remember us.

"We, in a particular manner, desire you to strive together with us in your prayers for our pastor, who is to go out from us for a season to preach the gospel in Ireland.

"Trusting that our correspondence will tend to endear us more to each other, and assuring you of our sympathy, and forwardness to assist you in any thing wherein we have opportunity, we remain, beloved brethren, yours in the Lord Jesus.

"*Edinburgh, April 18. 1804.*"

When the letter (p. 6.) was sent to the church at Kirkcaldy, a copy of it was forwarded to the church at Cambuslang, to which the following answer was received.

"The Church of Christ in Cambuslang, to the churches of Christ in Edinburgh, with their bishops and deacons : Grace unto you, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Beloved brethren, We received your very affectionate letter on the 3d instant. With pleasure we learned, that your attention as churches has been turned to the situation of the heathen. We have often reflected, with great satisfaction of heart,

on that benevolence of mind which dictated the formation of missionary societies, and we are convinced that they have, by the blessing of God attending their honest efforts to propagate the glorious gospel of the grace of God, been abundantly useful to the souls of perishing men; yet we are fully persuaded, that the closer we keep to the revealed will of God on every subject, the surer ground we have to expect the divine countenance and blessing; and on this subject it appears to us more consonant to that will, that we should imitate the first Christians, by causing the gospel to sound out from the churches of the saints. When missionaries are selected by the churches of the saints, and sent forth by them after being recommended to the grace of God, we have reason to expect more unanimity of mind and steadiness of effort in the great cause, and by the divine blessing more abundant success.

"Brethren, when we reflect on the deplorable situation of the heathen; when we remember that Jesus died and rose again, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached to all nations; and that the Father hath promised to give the Son the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession—we cannot but cheerfully concur with you in that most godlike and benevolent of all designs, the delivering of the nations from the miserable slavery of sin, and translating them into the glorious liberty and blessedness of the children of God in the kingdom of his dear Son. We therefore esteem it our duty and privilege, to unite with you in supplicating the great Head of the church to smile on all your attempts (by following his word) to fill the earth with his glory. We should rejoice, brethren, in being able to assist you with our substance; and although our circumstances at present be rather unfavourable, we humbly trust that our deep poverty will be found abounding to the riches of our liberality—convinced that if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted, according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

"We little expected, brethren, that we would have been called upon to part with our beloved pastor, that he might engage in this important work. We were rather hurt at not being informed of his design, until his mind was fully made up on the subject. He mentioned several reasons which had induced him to come to this determination, and requested us not to use any influence to prevent him from putting his design into execution. Although we are convinced that our pastor, in acting as he did, was influenced by a desire to be more extensively useful in promoting the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom upon earth, yet we are at a loss to perceive what part of the word of God authorises a pastor to leave a church, when blessed with

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peace, love and unity in all things that pertain to the faith and practice of the gospel.

"Dear brethren, if any thing prevent us from giving our hearty concurrence to our pastor's leaving us, that he may engage in the important work of preaching the gospel to the heathen, it is what we have just now mentioned. If we saw this clear from the scriptures, we would cheerfully make the sacrifice, and we humbly trust would rejoice we had it to make.

"However, our pastor being fully resolved to go as a missionary, we think it improper to constrain him to stay among us, contrary to his own inclination; and if it be the will of God, that he should go to preach the gospel to the heathen, we hope and pray that God would bestow on him all needful grace, and make him instrumental in turning many from darkness to light, and from dumb idols to serve the living God, and to wait for his Son from heaven—We believe that our pastor, in taking this step, is not influenced by any want of attachment to us, either as individuals or as a church; and notwithstanding all that has taken place, we still esteem him highly in love for his work's sake.

"Brethren, as we consider it our duty and interest to look out for a pastor with all convenient speed, we hope you will join with us in praying the great Head of the church, that he, in his sovereign mercy, would grant us a pastor or pastors, who shall be willing to share in the comforts and crosses which he may be pleased to allot us in this world, and who shall be qualified for preaching the faithful word in simplicity and purity; and whose skill in the word of righteousness will enable him to instruct all of us in the knowledge of God's truth and ways, in the ordinances of his house, in the laws thereof, the comings in thereof, and the goings out thereof.

"Praying that all grace may abound to you, through the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord, we remain, beloved brethren, yours in the fellowship of the gospel.

"Cambuslang, March 15. 1804."

"The churches of Christ in Edinburgh, to the church of Christ in Cambuslang: Grece be unto you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

"We received yours, dear brethren, with unfeigned pleasure, and we doubt not but the Lord will amply recompense you for the sacrifice you have willingly made of your beloved pastor for his service.

"We cannot be surprised that you should feel upon the occasion, but our God will supply all your wants, out of his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus.

"The peace and unity with which you inform us you have been blessed, calls for our grateful praises on your behalf.

"In the general directions given in the word of God respecting the duty of pastors, it cannot be expected, that every particular case which may occur should be described, or that minute directions should be given in regard to them. But we are sure, that it is agreeable to the word of God, that every man should be fully satisfied in his own mind as to the path of duty. Your pastor has long had a great desire to preach the gospel to the heathen. In the course of providence, he has a very favourable opportunity of accomplishing his desire. He is conscious that he does not use lightness in quitting the charge of a church to which he is much attached: but, taking the strong inclination which he feels to go abroad in connection with the opportunity of accompanying his dear brother, and being sent out by the churches, he considers himself to be called of God to the work, and therefore that he is bound to go forward.

"We think it a token for good, beloved, that you have freely given him up to the arduous work, and we trust the experience he has acquired whilst with you will eminently tend to qualify him for it. Your example, brethren, has served to provoke the church at Kirkcaldy to approve, in the most cordial manner, of our dear brother M'Lae following what he judges to be the path of duty.

"We hope to be able soon to communicate to you something on the subject of the mission.

"We trust our correspondence on this subject, will tend to make us feel a more lively interest in each others welfare.

"We shall not cease, beloved, to pray for you. We request you to remember us; and, in a particular manner, to strive together in your prayers with us for our pastor, who is going on an itinerancy to Ireland. And now, brethren, may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you, that which is well pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen. We remain, beloved brethren, yours in the bonds of love."

"Edinburgh, April 23. 1804."

HAVING thus obtained the full consent of their brethren, Messrs Paterson and M'Lae came to Edinburgh in June 1804, with a view of engaging in some additional studies preparatory to their going to India. During the following winter, they attended some of the classes in the University, as well as private lectures on different branches of science.

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On more mature consideration, it was found, that the expence which would be incurred by sending Mr M'Lae's family to India would be very great, and that his wife and children might probably be exposed to many inconveniences on their first arrival. It therefore appeared expedient, that the idea should be given up, and that Mr Paterfon should proceed to India, accompanied by an unmarried brother, if such could be found suitably qualified.

Mr Ebenezer Henderson, who was at that time studying in Edinburgh with a view to preach the gospel, in which, during an interval of his studies, he had been engaged the preceding summer in the north of Scotland, offered himself as a companion to Mr Paterfon. The churches, after being satisfied of his qualifications for the work, and finding that Mr P. was very desirous that he should accompany him, unanimously received him. Having been solemnly commended to Jesus by prayer with fasting, on the 23d of August 1805 they sailed from Leith to Copenhagen, intending to take their passage from thence to India in the ships of the season. On their arrival, however, they found they were too late, and that they must resolve to remain in Denmark during the winter. To this they were the more easily reconciled, as they had an opportunity of preaching the gospel to their countrymen in Copenhagen and Elsinore. The accounts received from them from time to time, and the prospect afforded of their being made extensively useful in their present situation, occasioned the brethren at home seriously to consider whether it might not be their duty to remain for some time on the Continent. So fully were Messrs Paterfon and Henderson convinced of the importance of the sphere in which they were placed, that, although still desirous of proceeding to India by the Spring ships, they felt uneasy in the prospect of leaving it, unless others could be found to occupy their station.

The churches had seen, that it was impossible for them to proceed without laying down a plan for their operations. They had accordingly sent the brethren to Copenhagen on their way to India. They were aware, however, that their plans might be different from that of the great Head of the church, and as they had no hope of success but from him, they desired to be guided by him in all things. The favourable accounts received from Denmark, made so strong an impression on the pastors of the churches, that they determined without delay to write to Messrs P. and H. and to learn how their minds stood affected. They accordingly addressed to them the following letter.

"DEAR BRETHREN,

Edinburgh, Dec. 25. 1805.

"We have perused, with much interest, Brother P.'s letters of 9th and 12th November. Neither you nor we anticipated

pated, before parting, the circumstances which have since occurred, and which demand our mutual thanksgivings to our all-wise and gracious Redeemer, while they are much calculated to lead us to repose unlimited trust in Him, and to refer entirely to his direction the line of duty as He shall *day by day* mark it out. This is the duty and privilege of all the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ in every condition and in every place, and peculiarly applies to those, whose exclusive business in the world is to propagate the favour of his name.

"From the statement in your various letters, particularly in the two last, we have been strongly persuaded, that for the present at least, the Lord calls for your labours in that part of the world where you are now placed. With your object in view as Missionaries, we cannot conceive a situation of greater importance, or of better hopes for glorifying the Saviour by making known his salvation. There you have at once an opportunity of instructing many who never heard of the truth, and of rekindling the light which seems ready to vanish from that part of the world.

"You know, brethren, that at the beginning of the gospel, when, as now, there were not labourers sufficient for the harvest, the Head of the church directed his servants, *where* they were to go, sometimes sending them to places to which their own inclinations were turned, and sometimes thwarting their designs in this respect, and even frustrating their attempts to carry them into effect. Now, although we are not to look for that supernatural direction *as to places*, which was frequently, if not always, vouchsafed to the Apostles and to the first ministers of the word; yet we are fully persuaded that his will may in many cases be so clearly ascertained from his providential openings and arrangements, as to bind the conscience and remove all dubiety as to the line of duty.

"To us nothing appears more clear, than that the service in which you are now engaged, ought not to be abandoned, nor the door closed which the Lord has opened. Your present sphere of labour is already equal to your exertions, and these exertions, even in a missionary view, are of as great importance to the interests of Christianity as if made in China or in any other part of the world. What consequences would result from genuine Christianity being introduced among the trading part of the North of Europe, and into the principal cities on the Continent? From your letters this appears to be practicable, and from the favour in the eyes of the people which the Lord has already given you, we think there is every reason to believe, that you will be able to prosecute this important work with greater advantage than any that might afterwards go out.

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" Considering therefore the sphere you now occupy, and the hopes of its extension, we are of opinion that it is impossible to find any other place where you can be of greater service in Christ's kingdom: of course we are most desirous you should continue there, until the duty of leaving it be made as evident as the contrary seems to be at present. We are apt to suppose that similar ideas must have occurred to your own minds, although from their being directed ultimately to another object, you may not have given the matter that consideration which it is the object of this letter earnestly to request you will do.

" Dear brethren, you need not be told, that in obeying the Saviour, we ought not to go before him, even in purpose. To all our resolutions this condition must attach, *if the Lord will*. How you are to serve him, and where, he alone knows, and his counsel shall stand. It is needless for us to multiply words. We have mentioned the reasons for our thinking as we do. These have been furnished by your letters; and to them may be added the following considerations, which are also of much importance.

" In aiding you where you are, both with necessary support and with assistants, the churches here will have a vast deal more in their power than they would have, were you to go to India. For although we have confidence that you will incur no unnecessary expence, while on our part we would endeavour to supply all your wants, yet the sum necessary to transport and settle you in India, with the additional expence of living in that country, would, we apprehend, in a great measure, preclude the prospect of reinforcing the mission, as well as prevent other exertions. The probability of the continuance of life and health, is also considerably greater in your present station: and you run less risk of being interrupted in your operations in Europe than in India. The time that would be consumed in the voyage, and in finding a settlement, would also be saved. And besides, while great and well directed exertions are making in India by Societies who proceed in a settled regular train, and already occupy the principal stations, the immense field which the Lord seems to open to you, *is totally neglected of all*, and there you would proceed without any danger of interfering with others. It may also be added, that from the most credible sources of information lately obtained from natives of different parts of Germany, several of whom some of us have seen, and who appear to be pious and intelligent men, there is every reason to believe, that unspeakable benefit might arise to Christianity on the Continent, from the zealous and prudent exertions of those who know and can speak the truth in simplicity and in love. An instance was

mentioned in proof, of a baker, lately in Berlin, who was of great service to the cause of the blessed Redeemer, by his individual and unsupported exertions, and chiefly in conversation with those to whom he had access.

"It is unnecessary for us here to advert to any remark that might be made on the opinion we have submitted to your consideration, as if there was a change of ground, and a departing from what was understood by us all. You cannot fail to see, that the principles of secular business do not apply to this matter. Our only object was, to serve God in the gospel of his Son, and India was the place we thought of. But if He calls for your services nearer home, then it is our duty to obey. And we have been led, from the views afforded by your letters, to see more clearly than we before did, the necessity and duty of forming no purpose in promoting the influence of the truth, without subjecting our operations, in every part of their progress, to such alterations as may be dictated by the light of an all-wise and gracious Providence.

"We have thus, dear brethren, freely stated to you our sentiments. We shall be glad to hear from you how far they correspond with your own. We trust that the Lord himself will direct you in this important matter. He has promised to guide the meek in judgment; and we are persuaded that wherever you shall ultimately be called to labour, we shall all have reason to adore Him who is faithful to his promise, and guides the blind in a way that they know not."

How much these sentiments accorded with those of Messrs P. and H. will appear by their answers.

"DEAR BRETHREN,

Elisneur, Jan. 18. 18c6.

"I am deeply convinced of the force of the observations communicated in your letter of the 25th ult. Our detention in this country at the first, appeared evidently to be of the Lord. Since the commencement of our exertions for promoting the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom on the Continent, I fondly hoped that brethren would be found to supply our stations in the spring, when (as we then expected) we should sail for India. With joy I anticipated the fruits that would be produced by their labours, and earnestly prayed that our small beginning might issue in the extension of the unadulterated gospel of our Lord, in this part of the world. Previous to the reception of your letter, I conceived, that it would not be our duty to leave our present stations unoccupied; but then I had no doubt of some being found to supply our lack of service here. This, you say, is not at present attainable, and therefore I cheerfully comply with your request, to tarry here, at least for a sea-

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son. When, however, our proceeding to India shall appear as manifestly the will of our heavenly Father, as at present our remaining here does, I trust I shall as cheerfully go there. I feel my mind as much intent upon the primary object we had in view when we left Scotland as it was then, and till within these few days I had the fullest expectation of leaving Denmark soon. But since the Lord has ordered matters otherwise, it becomes us to submit to his blessed will. How wonderful are his judgments, and his ways are past finding out! As you justly observe, "He leads the blind by a way which they know not." How strikingly is this divine truth exemplified in our case. Surely we have much reason to bless the name of our God, and look to him with humble submission, saying, "Lord lead us in the way that we should go."—

"The accounts you have received from time to time, can convey but a faint idea of the deplorable state of the Continent, in regard to religion. We pity the inhabitants of Bengal or Otaheite because they worship idols, but what better are Europeans who worship *no* god?—

"Thus I have given you my mind with regard to our present situation. I trust that you cease not to pray for us, that we may be kept from falling, and be zealous and useful labourers in the vineyard of the Lord. With love to all the brethren, I remain yours affectionately for Jesus' sake,

EBEN. HENDERSON."

"Copenhagen, 20th Jan. 18c6.

"DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,

"Yours of the 25th ult. I received on the 12th inst. I immediately sent it under cover to Mr Henderson who was at Elthineur, desiring him to return it, and inform me what he thought was our duty in our present circumstances. Above, you have brother Henderson's sentiments on this subject, and although he has anticipated much of what I had to say, yet I shall state my thoughts on this matter more fully, that so you may know how my mind stands affected.

"I need not inform you after what I said in my letter of the 9th ult. that notwithstanding all that had taken place since coming to this country, I was as much bent on going to India, as when I parted with you. Not that I had not thought of the necessity of remaining for a season on the Continent of Europe. It often occurred to me, that the people here were as ignorant of the gospel as the people of India, and in many respects as destitute of the means of being made acquainted with it. I am convinced of course, that it is as necessary to send missionaries to this, and the neighbouring countries, as to Hindostan, if not

more so. I anticipated the advantages which might be derived from our remaining here, or going to some other part of the Continent. I perceived that it would be easier to obtain access to the people in Europe than in India; that introducing the gospel among them would be attended with less expence, and that more was likely to be done in less time. I often asked myself, might I not be as usefully employed in preaching the gospel to Europeans as to Hindoos, and probably more so? Will it not be easier for our friends to send us out assistants? And if the Lord bless his word for the conversion of those who attend, are they not likely to be more extensively useful to their fellow men than the uncultivated heathen? As the field for missionary exertions is as extensive as important, and in all probability will be much more productive, why not remain? Such thoughts frequently made me hesitate; but my strong desire to devote myself to the propagation of the gospel among the heathen, soon turned the balance, and kept my mind steadily fixed on going to India as we originally intended. Although your letter suggested no new ideas to my mind, yet as it is your opinion that we should remain for a season where we are, to improve the opening the Lord has made for us in this country, after considering the matter fully, and looking to the Lord for direction, and corresponding with my companion concerning it, I cheerfully acquiesce with your advice to remain. This I consider not only to be your wish, but likewise the will of my heavenly Father. The circumstances connected with our coming to this country, and what has befallen us during the time we have been here, so fully convince me that the Lord has some work to do with us here, that I dare not hesitate for a moment longer as to remaining. And yet were you as urgent for us to embark for India, as you are for us to remain, I would most willingly embark by the first opportunity.

"Well, the Lord has placed me in a situation similar to what I was when I went to Cambuslang. I was then fully set on going out as a missionary to Bengal, all I wanted was a suitable companion. Brother M'Lae was on the eve of being married, and could not think of accompanying me, and none of my other class-fellows were disposed for the work. Thus, as I thought, nothing but the want of a companion prevented me from going at that time; but the unalterable purpose of Jehovah was the real barrier, and the other was only the means of bringing me to act according to it. He had much work to do with me in Cambuslang—a number of poor sinners to bring in to his sheepfold, who, I trust, shall be my crown and my joy in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ—a church to plant there by my instrumentality, which I doubt not is precious in his sight, and the object of his paternal care. The interest I feel in them makes

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them dear to me as my own soul, and the comfort I enjoyed in them makes me anxious for the salvation of sinners wherever I go, preaching the everlasting gospel, that they may be united together, in like manner, to observe the statutes of their Lord and Saviour. I do not think that ever I shall give up the thoughts of going to India so long as I keep my health, and am not entangled with a family. But whether I shall ever see that country is known only to the Lord. Perhaps it may be with me as to India as it was with Paul as to Spain; or I may be brought to it at a time, and in a way very unexpected, as he was to Rome. The will of the Lord be done. Blessed be his name that ever he made me acquainted with his salvation, and put it into my heart to devote my life to his service in the work of the ministry. I trust I shall ever be willing to serve him by night and by day, with my whole person, wherever he calls for my labours.

"Dear brethren, do not imagine from any thing I have said, that I feel disappointed in not immediately proceeding on my voyage, or that this circumstance gives me any uneasiness. Notwithstanding my strong desire to go, you can have no conception how easy I feel at the prospect of remaining. The Saviour, who will not have us to serve him against our will, has, in a way of which I can give no account, made me perfectly content with my present situation.—Thus, brethren, I have freely stated to you my mind as to the subject of your letter.

"I hope you will participate in our joy on account of what the Lord has done for us at Ellsieur. Our congregation there had scarcely ever exceeded a dozen, and sometimes not above half that number. On the 5th there were only seven. But all of a sudden, when we little expected it, their number increased. On the 12th, I received the following note from our brother—
 "Be not surprised when I inform you, that the seats were not sufficient for the number who attended to-day. Some sat on the sides of the windows, and others stood. Well, this is all in answer to prayer. I suppose you have had much earnest entreaty at the throne of grace last week. I had, and particularly this morning about 10 o'clock. The Lord has the hearts of all men in his hand, and he can turn them whatever way he pleaseth. He will be enquired of, however, by his people. They were remarkably attentive," &c. We had been rather disheartened on account of their backwardness; but we began to question if we were not in the fault ourselves in restraining prayer for them before the Lord. This led us to the throne of grace, and occasioned our setting apart some nights, on which we designed, though separate in body, to meet there to ask direction of God, and to entreat him to incline them to come and hear; and I cannot ascribe their coming, in the manner they

did, to any thing else.—Do we not err in not praying, that the Lord may dispose men to come and hear his truth declared? It may favour of what some people would call a desire to be popular; but the least attention to Rom. x. 13,—17. will prevent us from being improperly influenced by the fear of being accused of this.—As last Lord's day morning was excessively stormy, I little expected that there would be almost any hearing him, and yet he informs me that there were about fifty, and they had only three females, although they have always been the most numerous; but it was almost impossible they could come out. Two thirds of our usual congregation here were absent, owing to the badness of the weather. Indeed the weather, for more than three months, has been very indifferent, so that many have been prevented from attending, who, I doubt not, will attend so soon as the weather gets settled.

"I hope, dear brethren, you will never be long in letting us hear from you. It is only through the medium of letters that we have any fellowship with our Christian brethren at present. As you all enjoy this unspeakable blessing in so eminent a degree, do endeavour by your letters to supply our present want of it.—

JOHN PATERSON."

These letters were immediately read to the churches, and received the cordial approbation of the brethren. Others have since been received from them, of which the following are extracts.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

Copenhagen, April 8. 1806.

"YOUR kind letter of the first of March gave us much joy. We were exceedingly happy to learn, that the alteration which has taken place with respect to our mission, met with the hearty approbation of all the brethren. Nothing but the fullest conviction that it was the will of God, could have induced the brethren to propose the alteration, and nothing else could have prevailed with us to accede to their proposal, and it is encouraging to find, that the steps we have taken appear to all our brethren to be duty. Although we consider ourselves as at perfect liberty to adopt such plans as appear to us to be most for the glory of God, yet it would be painful to us in the extreme, to find that any part of our conduct was not approved of by the churches. I have no doubt, that if on all hands we have the glory of God simply in view, and follow the path of duty as he *day by day* shall be pleased to point it out, it will in a great measure prevent any difference in opinion from ever taking place.

"It gives us most sincere pleasure to know, that our brethren take such an interest in all that concerns us. The work in

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which we are engaged, is we trust the work of the Lord, which we hope will ever be dear to them, and endear to them all who are in any way instrumental in carrying it on in the world. The Lord grant that we may be enabled to act in such a manner as to prove ourselves worthy of the confidence they place in us, and in no respect to disappoint their expectation concerning us.—
JOHN PATERSON."

"*Elfsneur, April 12. 1806.*

"THROUGH the kindness of our Heavenly Father, we have enjoyed good health since you last heard from us. We continue to fill up, as far as lies in our power, that sphere of usefulness which he in his mercy hath opened for us, and we have reason to hope that our labours will not be in vain in the Lord. Several of our hearers in both places begin to think—the great matter is, if they be brought to think aright. This is the Lord's work. May he give them on the behalf of Christ, the perception of that truth which flesh and blood cannot reveal. If he be pleased to bless our labours, in any measure to this end, we are amply rewarded, and shall therein greatly rejoice. The persuasion of having the prayers of so many of God's dear people in our behalf gives us great encouragement to go forward. Pray ye more and more earnestly for us that our faith fail not. We are surrounded with many great temptations, and consequently stand in need of peculiar strength from on high. Oh that we may have more and more of that faith which overcometh the world! that we may watch and pray, and daily be looking for the coming of our Lord!

"Some time ago, when looking over the intelligence communicated in some of the old Magazines respecting the state of religion on the Continent, I met with a letter from a clergyman in Sweden with which I was much pleased. This led me to think of writing him, which I accordingly did; and the following is a copy of the answer I lately received from him.

"*Storeberg near Lidköping, March 25. 1806.*

"Dearly beloved brother and friend in Christ,

"Your letter was very welcome to me, and I hope you will excuse me in delaying the answer so long. This has been owing to the difficulty I have in writing English, not having written a line in that language in the space of thirty years.

"You may be assured that every new lover of the Lord with whom I become acquainted, every new notice of the growing of his reign, will ever rejoice, warm and revive my poor and cold heart. How often have I wished to be among the heathen,

or among such Christians where I could have an open door to their hearts ! Since 1799, I have had my own church (assembly of hearers), in which the blessed gospel has been preached for many years ; nevertheless I cannot with certainty reckon thirty real lovers of our Saviour. The people sleep, and have no ears for the precious atonement—which is my greatest sorrow. In the neighbourhood are many awakened and sincerely walking souls, with whom I have intimacy.

“ There are about twenty preachers of us in this diocese, who have united ourselves as an yearly assembly and conference for the purpose of edifying and exhorting one another in the true service of our Lord. This Society (the only one of that nature in Sweden, so far as I know) was established in 1802.—Your dear letter shall be communicated in our Society. I am sure it will give them much joy ; and if you will continue to give us further accounts of the wished success of the Lord’s work by yourselves and others, it will interest me more than all things in the world ; and I will therewith rejoice, as also my brethren and other friends.

“ Oh ! that we may with soul and body devote ourselves to him, who devoted himself for us in the most bloody death ! To know, love and serve him, Oh ! that is already a heaven upon earth. Blessed be you and your dear brother, and every one who is in flaming love and fervent zeal to the ever and ever-adorable Saviour. For his sake I love you with all my heart, and through his grace I remain your poor brother,

L. C. RETZIUS.”

“ To-day I sent him another letter, mentioning such information respecting religion as I was possessed of. I have also made some enquiries respecting the circulation of tracts in Sweden, and the probable expence of printing a number of them in the language of that country.—

EBEN HENDERSON.”

“ *Copenhagen, May 14. 1806.*

— “ WE rejoice to think, that the opinion you had formed as to the propriety of sending missionaries to the Continent is more and more strengthened. It gives us much pleasure that all our friends are so unanimous as to this matter, and it is calculated to confirm us in the choice we have made. Indeed we are more and more convinced, that at present we are where God would have us to be ; so that although our desire to go to India be unabated, we would consider it disobedience to the divine will to leave our present situation. We are happy to inform you, that the change which has taken place has not operated in the smallest degree against us. Our congregation continues equally good as at first. Some who came for a few days have

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fallen off, but their place has been supplied by others. We have every reason to believe, that our congregation here will continue good, and that if there be any change, it will be for the better. What gives us much encouragement is, that we have access to many in private, and can use the freedom to speak to them about the things of the eternal world; and perhaps more is to be done in a place like this by private conversation, than in any other way whatever.—

"What an honour will it be, if we be instrumental of forming and executing plans which, by the blessing of God, may be the means of enlightening those nations where the beast and the false prophet have so long had their seat. We are convinced with you, that this lies at the foundation of all missionary work, and that it is the way in which the apostles went to work. May the plans we form correspond with the vastness of the object, and may we be enabled to prosecute them with such zeal and prudence as to ensure their success! It is an object in which the heart of God and of Christ is engaged. Let us see that we engage in it with our whole hearts. What appears to us most difficult, is to manifest in every part of conduct that liberality of spirit by which the apostles were so remarkably distinguished, whilst with them we hold every particle of divine truth precious, and scrupulously observe all the ordinances of the Lord. Past experience would almost make us think that this was impossible; but we hope that as a body and individuals we have obtained such views of the truth, as not only to convince us of its possibility, but also to enable us by our conduct to convince all the friends of truth, that it is both practicable and necessary, for our own comfort and the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. We remain, &c.

J. P.—E. H."

Messrs Paterfon and Henderson have distributed a number of English tracts, and have got several translated by a friend into the Danish language. These they have endeavoured to circulate, and have had the pleasure of finding, that they are in general well received, especially by those in the higher ranks of life. A respectable merchant has kindly accommodated them with a sale-room, where one of them preaches on the Lord's day. The other is engaged at Ellsineur, where they have got the use of a chapel. Mr Henderson made a short excursion to Helsingforce, on the opposite coast of Sweden, and there distributed tracts.



Mr Archibald M'Lae, who intended at the beginning to accompany Mr Paterfon to India, although, for the reasons already noticed, he heartily acquiesced in the propriety of his not proceeding to that part of the world, was yet very desirous of going abroad; and upon America being proposed, he cheerfully undertook the voyage. He accordingly sailed with his family for

New York in the end of October last, and arrived in December. Very pleasant accounts have since been received from him. He has resolved to remain at present in that city. The following is an extract from his last letter.

"MY DEAR SIR,

New York, Feb. 12. 1806.

"I PRESUME that before this time you have heard of our safe arrival, and of the kind reception we met with, from several of our friends in this place. The Lord has been very gracious to us since we parted with you. He has not left his servants destitute of his mercy, nor of his truth: though he has visited us with some trials and afflictions, these bear no proportion to the multitude of his mercies which we have experienced. Mrs M'Lae has been ill with a fever for these four weeks past, but through the goodness of God she is now recovered. The children were both very unwell at the same time, but they are also getting better. Since I came here, I have in general preached five times a week, and have upon the whole, been well attended. I had an opportunity of preaching to the convicts in the States prison. There are upwards of four hundred and fifty convicts. They were very attentive, and I have reason to hope, that the gospel has not been preached in vain.—The Lord in sovereign mercy has been pleased to bless his word, and render it effectual for the salvation of a young man with whom I was formerly acquainted when in Scotland. He belongs to Glasgow, and came out here about four years ago. I have conversed with him frequently. He was in great distress of mind when he was first awakened, but he has now obtained effectual rest to his soul in the work of Jesus, and is rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. I hope the Lord will more and more cause his word to have free course and be glorified.

"I think I mentioned in the letter I wrote to your brother, that we were very much at a loss for a suitable place of worship. We are now very comfortably supplied. We have rented a chapel for fifteen months, which was formerly occupied by the Universalists. It is a very handsome chapel, well seated, in the centre of the town, and will contain betwixt four and five hundred people. The rent is at the rate of three hundred and seventy-five dollars a year. I have preached two Sabbaths in it. In the forenoon and afternoon nearly full, and in the evening remarkably crowded. The people appear to be very attentive, and many of them call it the *new gospel*, but I hope though it be *new* to many of them, it is after all the *ancient gospel*.—

ARCH. M'LAE."

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It was intended that Mr Walter Balfour, who also studied under Mr Ewing and Mr Cowie, should accompany Mr M'Lae; but, ow-

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ing to an accident which he met with, he was prevented. During last winter, he prosecuted his studies at the University of Edinburgh, and on the 28th of May, embarked for London on his way to America. He has been engaged, during these five years past, in preaching the gospel in different parts of Scotland; and, although he has had several pressing invitations, always declined entering upon the pastoral office, as he wished to keep himself disengaged for more extensive usefulness. His intention now is to take his passage for Halifax, and to proceed down the coast, visiting the different towns, and regulating his stay in them according to circumstances. By this means, we shall be able to acquire much information respecting the state of religion in America.—He naturally felt a strong desire to have a fellow-labourer to accompany him; and the churches, having been fully satisfied of the qualifications of Mr Archibald M'Queen, who has been engaged in preparatory studies under Mr Cowie in Edinburgh, and who has also been employed in preaching in different parts of Scotland, have agreed to send them out together.

In addition to these missions, Mr Francis Dick has gone to Quebec. He sailed for that place in June 1805.—He went through a course of preparation similar to that of the others, and was for two years employed in preaching both in Scotland and Ireland, but, for the same reason with Mr Balfour, declined accepting a settled charge. He has been well received by many in Quebec, and is at present preaching in a chapel formerly occupied by a preacher from the London Missionary Society. Since his arrival, he has visited Montreal, and the accounts we have had from him, and from other quarters, lead the churches to hope, that many preachers may yet be employed in that country. The following is an extract of the last letter from him.

“*Quebec, January 11. 1806.*”

“As there is a gentleman who intends to leave this place for Britain in a few days, I have taken the opportunity of sending you a few lines by him. I thank my God that by his goodness I am in good health, and indeed I have been so ever since I came to this country. I hope this will find you and all my dear friends about Edinburgh in the same comfortable situation. I have nothing of a particular nature to mention at present. I have been preaching the word of life to the poor people ever since I came, but cannot tell of any fruits having yet appeared. Our place of worship is pretty well attended. In the evening of the Lord's day it is crowded by people of every description, who seem to hear with great attention, and who behave with the greatest decency, which I am told was not the case formerly; for they often made great disturbance in the even-

ings. A few of the papists attend in the evening, but I have not had any opportunity of speaking with any of them in private. I understand some of them would wish information about divine things, but fear of offending their priests has more weight with them than the fear of offending God. The papists here are a set of poor ignorant inoffensive creatures, who live in the most friendly manner among themselves, and are by no means bad neighbours. They are very kind to strangers. But what a pity it is, that they are involved in the thick darkness of superstition and ignorance: while alas! their neighbours conduct is the means of confirming them in their delusion. For they say, "If the Protestants, who read the Bible, were better men than the Catholics, we might think of becoming Protestants, but while we know that they are not so good as Catholics we cannot but think Popery is best." Thus Christ is wounded in the house of his pretended friends. Hereby the way of truth is evil spoken of. Here we may see the truth of these words; "My name is blasphemed among the heathen through you." When I think upon all these circumstances, I am ready to fear that it is impossible to bring the Catholics to the knowledge of the gospel. This is however mine infirmity, for what is impossible with man is possible with God. There is no mountain too great to stand before the accomplishment of his purposes. He will make all his mountains to become a way, and his high way shall be exalted. Awake, awake, O arm of the Lord! awake, as in ancient times, as in the generation of old!

"By the time that this reaches you I expect that some of the brethren will be preparing to set out for this quarter. I have sent word to Upper-Canada that I have written to Scotland in their behalf. The brethren need not be discouraged to undertake the voyage; for neither the danger of the sea nor the change of climate are at all so great as they are ready to think when at home. And though they were far greater than they are, the greatness of the object they have in view, with the immutable promise of a faithful God, are more than sufficient to quash every unbelieving fear. How many have ventured to cross the Atlantic with nothing else in view but the perishing riches of this world! But the motives by which the brethrens minds are influenced are infinitely more noble—to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may obtain, &c. I mentioned in my former letters to Edinburgh, that one Gaelic preacher and two English would be highly useful, and if only one of each could come for the first season, others might be found afterwards who would be disposed to come. But if even that cannot be obtained, I hope at least one English preacher will be found to come, as I would be very sorry if the people in

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Elizabeth town should be disappointed, seeing they expect one, and this might be the means of opening a door for the gospel in the upper country, where, humanly speaking, there is more likelihood of diffusing the gospel than here in the lower country, where Satan and Antichrist have their seat. The former has his seat in every country, and in every unconverted man's breast; but where the latter bears rule, the external impediments appear most formidable. I should like very much to go up the country the first summer, and leave one of those who come out in Quebec, which will relieve him of a long journey.

"You can let the churches know that I have not yet needed to draw any money from Scotland, and it is not likely I will need to do so while I am here.—Give my kind love to all my friends in particular, and to the churches in general. I hope I have an interest in your prayers daily. Dear brother, I pray for you and for all my dear brethren in Scotland, that the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, would make you perfect to do his will, working in you—to whom be glory for evermore.

FRANCIS DICK."

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It is with great pleasure we now state, that a Gaelic preacher, Mr James Reid, is extremely desirous of going out to his countrymen in Canada, and it is intended to send him there by the first opportunity, which is expected to occur about the end of this month. We hope that much advantage will arise from his being among the Highlanders in that country, of whom there are now many thousands, who can speak only their mother-tongue. Their situation with respect to religion is represented as truly deplorable, and we have had many urgent applications to send over to their help. Mr Reid's labours will not, however, be confined to them. He has studied the French language, with a view of being as extensively useful as possible in Canada, where it is so generally spoken. Like all the other brethren who have gone out from the churches, he has prosecuted a course of studies for the cultivation of his gifts, and the acquirement of the original languages of the Old and New Testament. He has also been engaged for a considerable time in preaching in the Highlands, and has had different invitations in that country to undertake the pastoral office, which he declined, in order that he might be able to go to his destitute countrymen and others abroad, on which his mind has long been bent.

In sending forth our brethren, we consider ourselves as merely discharging the incumbent duty of assisting them in their endeavours to promote the glory of Jesus, and to realize the earnest desire they have long had, of devoting their lives to missionary

exertions. We are not bound to them, nor they to us, by any promise or worldly tie whatever; but, while mutual confidence continues, we shall esteem it our duty to forward their designs.

We consider it a matter of the utmost importance with regard to all these our beloved brethren, that in addition to suitable means of improvement in knowledge, they have already had considerable experience in preaching the gospel at home. Having forwarded them, as we trust, after a godly sort, we are very desirous of lending assistance in the same great work to others, who in like manner may be deemed properly qualified. The harvest truly is great; but the labourers are still few.

We subjoin an account of the expences already incurred by these various missions.

**Dr. Abstract of Receipt and Expenditure on Account
of Foreign Missions, to June 1. 1806. Cr**

To monthly collections in Edinburgh, from July 1804 to June 1806,	L. 312	3	1	By amount of books, clothes, cash, &c. carried out by Messrs Paterson and Henderson,	L. 127	14	0
Extraordinary ditto,	147	3	5	Drawn for by them since their arrival,	161	0	0
Donations,	192	16	0	Amount of books, clothes, &c. for Mr M'Lae and family, and Mr Balfour, and of money carried with Mr M'Lae, and paid for passage of him and family to New York,	234	4	1½
R. S. Esq.	250	0	0	Mr Balfour's additional outfit and expences since Mr M'Lae's departure, including money carried with him,	29	7	6
A Lady by Mr Ewing,	5	0	0	Drawn for by Mr M'Lae since his arrival,	46	17	5
Anonymous, by Mr J. H.	5	0	0	Mission to Quebec,	90	3	5
Ditto by ditto,	10	0	0	Fees of classes at College, & maintenance of missionaries, & Mr M'Lae's family,	292	17	0½
A Friend, by Mr R. H.	5	0	0	Balance on hand,	34	13	0
A Friend, by Mr Ewing,	50	0	0				
Collection at the Tabernaule, Glasgow,	55	7	10				
Ditto at Albion Street Chapel, ditto,	47	16	0				
Ditto at Fgin,	5	0	0				
Ditto at Perth,	12	0	0				
Ditto at Strathmartin, &c.	3	0	8				
Ditto at Greenock,	5	7	6				
Ditto at Forres,	9	0	0				
Ditto at Montrose,	2	2	0				
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By this statement it will appear, that we have no idea of laying up any fund. No; let the silver and the gold, which are the Lord's, remain in the hands of those whom he has constituted his stewards, till it be needed.

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money for religious purposes with a view to posterity, we shall find little encouragement to act upon such a plan. It is well known, that many of the Socinian preachers in England are supported by money destined by pious individuals to preserve the *gospel of Jesus* in the congregations to which they belonged. The Lord thus teaches us, that he will be served by *the living*, that we should, in our day and generation, be ready to every good work, and leave the future care of the church to Him upon whose shoulders the government is laid, who has, in every age, raised up instruments to accomplish his purposes, and who will continue to do so.

We do not intend then to cramp our present exertions by anxious thoughts about to-morrow; or to ensnare ourselves, by endeavouring to accumulate or preserve a capital, which necessarily diminishes present exertions, checks the grace of liberality, and is always exposed to the risk of being in some way diverted from its original destination, or even employed in direct opposition to it. When opportunities offer, as we have freely received, we will freely distribute.

HAVING thus, dear brethren, set before you the origin and progress of this work, suffer us to intreat you to lay the subject seriously to heart. To you, dear brethren, members of our sister churches, we look with confidence for your prayers, your advice, your liberal support. The utmost frugality shall be studied; but still the expences must be considerable. We are well assured, that nothing shall be wanting on your part. Ye know the grace of the Lord Jesus, who, though he was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich. This gospel supports us under trouble; it gives a relish to the comforts of life, and enables us to look forward to death with joyful expectation. Shall we not, beloved, endeavour to impart to others those consolations wherewith we are comforted of God?—Let us remember also, that God will not forget our labours of love. Our brethren have left their friends to preach the gospel: shall we not be ready to assist them, that we may be fellow helpers of the truth? Yes, beloved; if it be necessary we will abridge ourselves of some superfluities for this blessed purpose, assured that it will be no grief of heart to us when leaving the world, that we denied ourselves in order to win souls for Christ. It is true that none of our missionaries are as yet labouring among heathens commonly so called; but is their sphere less important? No; it will aggravate the condemnation of many that they ever heard of Jesus Christ. Shall we then neglect to call them to repentance, because they have the name of Christians? Shall we overlook millions of perishing sinners in our neighbourhood, to whom we can publish the gospel at a

comparatively trifling expence and risk, that we may send missionaries to the distance of many thousand miles in search of avowed idolaters? Let us remember, there are but two characters in the world.

So far from considering, that the attention of Christians ought to be exclusively directed to countries where the name of Christ is unknown, we conceive that we have peculiar encouragements to send the gospel to those who profess the religion of Jesus. We find many in such situations, who, while they are living without God in the world, admit that the Scriptures contain a divine revelation. In addressing ourselves to such, we have the same advantage which the apostles had of old in reasoning with the Jews. It is also to be expected that among these, we shall meet with Christians who only require to be stirred up to active exertions. It is evident how very important it is, to provoke such to love and to good works. Some too will probably be found, who, although living by faith in Jesus, have yet very dark and perplexed views of truth. If they be more fully instructed, if their zeal be excited, they may not only be useful among their countrymen, but an host of missionaries to labour among idolaters will be raised up. Hence it appears, that to begin by visiting and preaching the gospel in countries called Christian, is the most effectual method to evangelize the heathen.

In these sentiments we are fully confirmed, when we attend to the manner in which the gospel was first published. We find, that while the apostles considered themselves to be debtors to all descriptions of men, their first attempts were directed towards those who professed the worship of the true God, especially to such as resided in populous cities, and among civilized nations. The advantages of this mode of procedure are sufficiently obvious; and we may with confidence follow their example. From the state of our own country, we may judge of the situation of others; for if we are to know the disciples of Christ by their fruits, and if faith purifies the heart and overcomes the world, how few amongst us have obtained it! But our own country is too favourable a criterion to judge by. On the Continent things are very different, and many who are very careless here, would be shocked if they saw the open profaneness and irreligion which prevail there. Brethren, let us endeavour to extend as far as possible the genuine doctrine of the cross; let us strive to impart to many of our fellow sinners just views of the nature of the kingdom of Jesus; and let us ever remember, that our exertions in his cause will be a good evidence of our growing attachment to him.

It is unnecessary for us, beloved, to add, that we have all need to look well to ourselves as churches and individuals. While

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professing to attend to the vineyard of others, we should beware of neglecting our own. While endeavouring to spread the knowledge of Christ, let us see that we walk in his Spirit. While calling on others to submit to Jesus, let our own subjection to him in all things be more apparent; and thus we shall hold forth the word of life. We are as a city set upon an hill which cannot be hid; let us dwell in love and unity, and with one mind strive together for the faith of the gospel.

This Report may be read by believers, who, in some respects, are not like minded with us. Brethren, we have nothing to conceal. We cheerfully lay our views and plans before you. We do not regard our differences from other Christians, in judgment and practice, to be unimportant. While, like them, we are convinced of the obligations under which we are laid to make known the glad tidings of salvation, according to our ability, throughout every quarter of the habitable globe, we are at the same time impressed with the importance of attending to the equally explicit precept of our Lord, of teaching men to observe all things whatsoever he hath commanded. We consider it our duty to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, in all its parts; and are consequently much concerned to walk in the fellowship of the gospel. We account the religion of Jesus to be ONE; connected and harmonious in all its parts. All the laws of the kingdom are published by the same authority, and we dare not disregard the least of them. But although we reckon those who do not follow the apostolical ordinances delivered to the churches, to be acting improperly, and earnestly desire to see them obeying the will of Christ in this respect, we can still acknowledge many such as disciples, and can love them for the truth's sake which dwelleth in them. We know from experience the effects of the prejudices of education, and various other obstructions and stumbling blocks, which prevent men from embracing the apostolical practice respecting the ordinances of Jesus.

If we have begun to act by ourselves in the important work of sending the gospel abroad, it is because we think it more for the glory of God than to connect ourselves with any society where differences of sentiment might excite dissension and cramp exertion. We should be willing to unite our endeavours with any who appear to love the Lord Jesus, so far as we are agreed; but we think, that as we could not attempt to plant, or sanction churches, formed upon any other plan, than that recorded in the New Testament, it is better, in the work of spreading the gospel, to proceed by ourselves. You see, brethren, what we are doing. Our efforts are at present directed to objects which have not hitherto been embraced by missionary societies. All admit the deplorable state of the Continent of Europe respecting religion,

and to this field the providence of God has led us. In America too we have ample scope for exertion. If you approve our designs, we shall thankfully receive assistance from you. We shall from time to time give you an account of our proceedings, and we trust you will join with us in prayer to the great Head of the church to crown our feeble attempts with his blessing, so far as they are agreeable to his will.

* * *Donations or Subscriptions are received by the Pastors of the different Churches.—Also by Mr JOHN ROBERTSON, Merchant, Edinburgh, Mr GEORGE GIBSON, and Mr JAMES OGILVIE, Merchants, Leith.*

